

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L USNATO 5372

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, NATO

SUBJ: FORMAT OF NATO REGIONAL EXPERTS' MEETINGS

1. SUMMARY. CANADIAN DEL HAS PROPOSED CHANGE IN FORMAT OF REGIONAL EXPERTS MEETINGS WITH GREATER EMPHASIS ON FREE DISCUSSION AND LESS ON PRODUCTION OF AGREED REPORT. MISSION IS INCLINED BELIEVE THAT EXISTING FORMAT BEST SERVES OUR INTERESTS ALTHOUGH IT CAN BE IMPROVED. ACTION REQUESTED GUIDANCE FOR NOV. 13 POLADS MEETING. END SUMMARY.

2. AT POLADS MEETING NOVEMBER 6, CANADIAN REP ADVISED THAT IN OTTAWA'S VIEW, CURRENT FORMAT FOR MEETINGS OF NATO REGIONAL EXPERTS WAS UNSATISFACTORY. MOST SUCH MEETINGS, HE SAID, LAST 3.5 DAYS AND BREAKDOWN INTO 1.5 DAYS OF GENERAL DISCUSSION FOLLOWED BY HALF DAY SPENT IN WORKING GROUPS DEVELOPING SECTIONS OF REPORT AND REMAINING 1.5 DAYS SPENT IN PLENARY WORKING OVER TEXT OF REPORT. CANADIANS BELIEVE THAT THESE MEETINGS SHOULD SPEND MORE TIME IN FREE DISCUSSION AND LESS TIME IN DRAFTING. WHILE OTTAWA HAS NO FIRM IDEAS ON HOW TO ACCOMPLISH THIS, CANADIAN REP SUGGESTED AS ONE POSSIBILITY ALLOWING INTERNATIONAL STAFF TO PRODUCE DRAFT REPORT ON BASIS DISCUSSION DURING FIRST TWO DAYS. THE EXPERTS COULD THEN APPROVE THIS REPORT, WHICH WOULD BE BRIEFER
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THAN CURRENT REPORTS AND WOULD CONCENTRATE ON IMPLICATIONS FOR ALLIANCE OF DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN GIVEN REGION.

3. UK REP NOTED THAT SUBJECT OF FORMAT HAD BEEN DISCUSSED

AT SEVERAL OF THE RECENT EXPERTS MEETINGS AND SAID THAT LONDON WAS ALSO INTERESTED IN IMPROVING THE CURRENT FORMAT. HE ASKED WHETHER REPORT HAD TO BE PRODUCED DURING MEETING ITSELF AND SUGGESTED THAT CHAIRMAN COULD SEND DRAFT REPORT TO NATIONAL DELEGATIONS FOR APPROVAL AFTER MEETING OR COULD SEND REPORT TO COUNCIL STRICTLY ON HIS OWN AUTHORITY. ACCORDING TO UK REP, LONDON BELIEVES THAT OVERALL LENGTH OF EXPERTS MEETINGS COULD BE REDUCED AND SUGGESTS CHANGING CURRENT DIVISION OF TIME BETWEEN DISCUSSION AND DRAFTING TO FAVOR THE FORMER.

4. COMMENT: SUBJECT WILL BE ON AGENDA OF NOVEMBER 13 MEETING AT WHICH TIME WE WOULD APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT'S VIEWS ON GENERAL QUESTION OF WHETHER EXISTING FORMAT SHOULD BE CHANGED AND UK AND CANADIAN SUGGESTIONS NOTED ABOVE. MISSION AGREES THAT THERE IS GREAT ADVANTAGE IN FREE DISCUSSION AMONG EXPERTS. HOWEVER, WE ALSO BELIEVE THAT PRODUCTION OF AGREED SEMI-ANNUAL EXPERTS REPORTS IS USEFUL IN HIGHLIGHTING ALLIANCE INTEREST IN THESE REGIONS AND STRENGTHENING ALLIANCE CONSULTATION ON DEVELOPMENTS OUTSIDE THE TREATY AREA. WE WOULD NOT WISH TO SEE THIS ELEMENT LOST. MOREOVER, EXPERTS REPORTS IN RECENT YEARS HAVE BEEN DISTINCT IMPROVEMENTS OVER EARLIER ONES. THEY ARE NOW BRIEFER, MORE INTENSIVELY FOCUSED ON IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ALLIES OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENTS, AND LESS TIME-CONSUMING IN PREPARATION THAN BEFORE. THE PREPARATION OF AGREED REPORTS SERVES AS A CATALYST FOR FORGING A COMMON INTERPRETATION OF DEVELOPMENTS AND, WHERE THIS IS NOT POSSIBLE, IDENTIFIES MORE CLEARLY DIFFERENCES OF INTERPRETATION. MISSION BELIEVES, THEREFORE, THAT FORMAT AND LENGTH OF EXPERTS MEETINGS SHOULD REMAIN BASICALLY UNCHANGED. WE MIGHT, HOWEVER, INSIST MORE FIRMLY THAT ALLIES, INCLUDING U.S., SUBMIT NATIONAL INPUTS WELL BEFORE MEETING SO THAT EXPERTS CAN BEGIN THEIR DISCUSSION AT ONCE, WITHOUT THE PRESENT DELAYS TO ALLOW THEM TO FIRST READ VARIOUS NATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS. ANOTHER IMPROVEMENT WHICH WILL GO INTO EFFECT THIS FALL, SUGGESTED BY AMBASSADOR RUMSFELD AND APPROVED BY THE COUNCIL LAST JUNE (USNATO 2764), WILL REQUIRE THE IS CHAIRMAN OF THE REGIONAL EXPERTS MEETINGS TO REPORT THE PRINCIPAL FINDINGS OF THESE MEETINGS TO THE COUNCIL. CONFIDENTIAL

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HOPEFULLY, THIS WILL ENGAGE THE COUNCIL ITSELF MORE DIRECTLY IN CONSULTATION PROBLEMS OUTSIDE TREATY AREA. RUMSFELD

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